

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

**Summary on
Fifth Chapter**

by

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SUMMARY (FIFTH CHAPTER)

- Note: 1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

In the fourth chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* talked about knowledge and renunciation. He referred to the wiseman as one whose *karmas* are burnt by the fire of knowledge (IV-19). He glorified the wiseman as one who is free from possessions, whose only activity is the maintenance of the body (IV-21), and who is happy with anything that comes due to *prārabda-karma* (IV-22). Evidently, these are the signs of a monk. At the same time, *Kṛṣṇa* concludes the chapter by advising *Arjuna* to take to action (IV-42). Naturally, *Arjuna* is not able to reconcile *Kṛṣṇa*'s various statements.

(In fact, secluded life and active life are only two lifestyles. The first is called *āśrama-sannyāsa* [*sāṅkhya*, in this chapter] and the latter is called *karma-yoga* [*yoga*, in this chapter]. In both the lifestyles one is identified with the equipments. He is a *kartā*, and hence a *saṁsārī*. This shows that lifestyle itself cannot give liberation. When Self-knowledge is gained, one discovers that he is *akartā*, *abhoktā* and hence *asaṁsārī*. Thus, the renunciation of body-identification is true *sannyāsa* which is called *jñānakarma-sannyāsa*. This *sannyāsa* can coexist with active life because it is mental renunciation. But *āśrama-sannyāsa* cannot coexist with active life because it is physical renunciation. *Kṛṣṇa* is advising *Arjuna* to remain in the society and attain the goal of *jñānakarma-sannyāsa*. But *Arjuna* mistakes the *sannyāsa* as *āśrama-sannyāsa* and sees contradiction in *Kṛṣṇa*'s teaching.)

So the chapter begins with *Arjuna*'s doubt as to how a person can remain in duty and be free from actions at the same time (1). *Kṛṣṇa* introduces the two lifestyles once again (it was discussed in III-3) and says that either of the lifestyles can help a person in getting *mokṣa* (through knowledge.) What is necessary in both lifestyles is a relative freedom from *rāga* and *dveṣa* which is an important

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condition for Self-knowledge. Of these two, *Kṛṣṇa* recommends active life as ideal for a common man. As the Lord Himself points out, a secluded life is difficult to pursue without maturity (2 to 6).

In the next six verses, the Lord talks about *karmayoga* and the stages of progress. A *karmayogī* dedicates all his physical and mental actions to the Lord without concern for the result. Because of this attitude, the results do not cause any reactions in his mind. Gradually, he develops self-control and ultimately discovers his true nature which is the same in all beings. (Of course, this is accomplished through the teaching of a *guru* alone.) This is called *jñānakarma-sannyāsa* (7 to 12).

In the following verses (13 to 21), *Kṛṣṇa* discusses the characteristics of a wiseman and his wisdom. Since he has discovered his identity with the pure Self, his nature is the same as that of the Self. In His presence all the organs function. Neither does He act nor does He instigate any one. According to their nature, the organs act and reap results. He is beyond good and evil results.

Still, because of ignorance, one is deluded (15). When Self-ignorance is destroyed by Self-knowledge, *Brahman*, which is the true nature, becomes evident (16).

Being spontaneously established in *Brahman* through the pursuit of *śravaṇam*, *mananam*, and *nididhyāsanam*, these wisemen revel only in *Brahman*. Thus, freed from all impurities, they attain *videhamukti* from where there is no return (17). They recognise the one homogeneous awareness-existence which is behind all beings as their substratum (18). Thus, having discovered the identity with the defectless, ever-unaffected *Brahman*, they overcome mortality here itself (19). Though *prārabda* brings favourable and unfavourable situations, these spontaneous, delusion-free wisemen are neither elated nor depressed (20). Detached from the world and established in *Brahman*, they enjoy infinite *ānanda* (21).

In the next two verses, the qualification of *vairāgyam* is stressed. Unless a seeker gets detached from sensual pleasures, he

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cannot attain infinite *ānanda*. A discriminative seeker who knows the impermanence of these contact-born pleasures will not indulge in them (22). And, one who can restrain the impulse of *kāma* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) alone is a man of self-control fit to enjoy life (23).

Now (24 to 26) the Lord talks about *videhamukti*. *Jīvanmuktas* who revel in themselves, who are pure-minded, who love all beings, and who have doubtless knowledge of the *Ātmā* attain oneness with *Brahman* (*videhamukti*) at the fall of the body.

Having clarified *Arjuna*'s doubt, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a brief reference to meditation in the last three verses which will be discussed elaborately in the next chapter.

(Though doubtless knowledge can be attained by *śravaṇam*, and *mananam*, the habitual notion that "I am the body" does not allow the knowledge to manifest as joy. Hence one has to assimilate this teaching by dwelling upon it which is called *nididhyāsanam*.)

Having removed all (thoughts of) sense objects, having withdrawn the sense organs, having regulated the breathing and freed from desire, fear, and anger, one should meditate with a desire for *mokṣa*. Such a *yogī* (meditator) becomes liberated forever (27, 28).

Knowing the Lord who is the receiver of all sacrifices, who is the supreme Lord of all worlds, and who is the friend of all beings the wiseman attains peace (29).

The topics of this chapter are:

1. The two lifestyles *sāṅkhya* and *yoga*.....1 to 6
2. *Karmayoga* and its *phalam*.....7 to 12
3. *Jñānakarmasannyāsa*.....13 to 21
4. *Vairāgyam* (detachment).....22, 23
5. *Videhamukti*24 to 26
6. Instruction on meditation.....27 to 29

Since the main topic is *sannyāsa* (renunciation), this chapter is called *Sannyāsa-yoga*.
